When it comes to the issue of fire prevention, business owners fall into one of two categories. There are the business owners who think that fire prevention/inspection/systems are unnecessary, a waste of money, and of little or no value (“after all we’ve been in business for _____ years, and never have had an incident”); and there are the business owners that desire the fire marshal’s presence, they place a high value on fire/life safety processes/inspections/systems.

What makes the difference? The bottom line: education. The accepting business owner knows that the following five fire impacts will cost much more later than the cost of fire prevention now.

**The 5 Impacts of Fire**

- **Economic Impact** – higher insurance premiums, loss of jobs/income, loss of home/business, loss of investments, medical costs

- **Organizational Impact** – low employee morale (due to feelings of inadequacy, or that the company “just doesn’t care”), recruitment/turnover (employees leave, hard to recruit new), cost

- **Legal Impact** – civil litigation (for monetary loss, injury, death, failure to comply with fire codes), substantial financial costs and lost time

- **Psychological Impact** – traumatic experience (for those injured, witnesses, family/friends, community-at-large)

- **Political Impact** – reduction in tax base, loss of property ‘units,’ increase in insurance rates, abandoned buildings, derelict neighborhoods

Fire prevention is about a lot more than just an inspector showing up to get some money, cost the business money, or go on a power trip. Fire prevention is by and large in the business of ensuring the continued success and longevity of businesses in the community.

*This is a reprint of a blog posting from United States Fire Administration dated August 22, 2011. The information is as relevant today as it was then.*